

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

SPEECH OF

HON. GUY RESCIENTHALER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 13, 2022

Mr. RESCIENTHALER. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of Amendment No. 431 in en bloc No. 4, offered by my good friend from Rhode Island, Mr. CICILLINE. I am proud to cosponsor this amendment and urge my colleagues to support it.

This amendment would safeguard important protections for servicemembers and their families by preventing the enforcement of forced arbitration clauses in any dispute covered under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The SCRA was passed to ease financial burdens on servicemembers when they are required to relocate for active duty assignments and protects them from eviction, foreclosure, and other financial penalties. Unfortunately, forced arbitration clauses deny our troops the ability to exercise their SCRA rights and protections in court. This is not right. Our servicemembers deserve peace of mind while they are out fighting for our freedoms, which is why Rep. CICILLINE and I are offering this amendment.

It is worth noting this language was included in the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act that passed the House with bipartisan support, but unfortunately was stripped during negotiations with the Senate. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on amendment No. 431 so we can ensure our military men and women can focus on their missions rather than worry about financial burdens at home.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 14, 2022

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated on July 8, 2022. The whole world mourns the loss of this great leader—the longest serving prime minister in the history of Japan. As the leader of his party, he won an unprecedented four elections spanning a time period of eleven years. His popularity was undeniable.

Prime Minister Abe always focused on the positive contributions made by the Japanese people. Instead of apologizing for the sins of his forebears, he promoted economic and foreign policies that put the people of Japan first. He was not afraid of China and taught the watching world that strength in the face of communist totalitarianism beats coddling and submission. This great patriot never tired in his commitment to fight for his people.

Prime Minister Abe taught the world about true leadership. Take care of your own people. Protect them. Value them.

I offer my condolences and deep sympathies to the people of Japan, and the friends and family of Mr. Abe. They gave the world a

shining star. And now he returns to the heavens.

SUPPORT OF H.R. 7900, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 14, 2022

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of my amendments to the National Defense Authorization Act. My amendments seek to better understand the mental health challenges and mechanisms of support available to servicemembers; mandate strong reports which will be critical in enacting better policy for servicemembers in the future; and make defense communities more resilient to the growing threat of climate change.

The first amendment (Amendment No. 322), which my colleague, Congresswoman ELAINE LURIA, has cosponsored, represents an important step forward in better understanding and combatting the epidemic of suicide facing not just the Navy, but the entire armed forces. There is a dearth of information about suicide and suicide prevention in the Navy, particularly on Navy ships. This is why directing the Inspector General of the Department of Defense to compile and publish a report on instances of suicide, suicide prevention, and response within the Navy is so important. This report will be comprehensive and desperately needed, given how little we truly understand why some sailors choose to end their lives, as well as the failures of command and areas where available resources have failed to catch and prevent these tragedies.

Additionally, the report will contain a survey of the mental health teams found on Navy ships and installations, so that we might better understand the limitations faced by these critical teams to properly treat, prevent, and respond to instances of suicidal ideation, suicidal intent, and suicidal attempts of the crewmembers they serve. These mental health teams are critical components of every unit, but do not always have the staff or resources available to provide necessary treatment and counseling to the sailors under their care. This report will be critical in better understanding the shortfalls these teams face, which will allow us to set them up for better successes in the future.

The discussion of suicides in the Navy is a personal one. I have lost constituents in the Navy, particularly this year wherein the shocking number of sailors who died by suicide while serving on the USS *George Washington* in Newport News, Virginia made national headlines. It is my belief that this DoD report will be the first step in better understanding how to prevent another, similar tragedy and see where the Navy could be doing more to actively support its servicemembers during times of mental and emotional crisis.

My second amendment (Amendment No. 323) requires the Inspector General of the Department of Defense to survey and report on programs across the armed services which allow servicemembers to file anonymous complaints and concerns without fear of identification or reprisal from command.

The chain of command is something that every soldier and employee of the Department

of Defense is taught to respect from the earliest days of training. Soldiers know there are some issues they cannot voice without risking the ire of their commanding officers or drawing undue attention to themselves, even if the nature of their complaint is a valid quality of life concern, a note about morale, a safety issue, or any reasonable request for support from existing Department services and programs.

Programs which allow anonymous complaint filing for servicemembers fill a critical gap of inter-unit communication by encouraging soldiers to advocate for themselves through a channel which they know will protect their identity and be taken seriously and reviewed on its merits. However, there is currently no DoD-wide review of where such programs exist, making it difficult to gauge their level of user participation, analyze data on the sorts of complaints filed, or even know which units and branches support such programs. This is a gap in knowledge that merits a proper review by the Department of Defense, so that we may better understand what support our soldiers are asking for and where they are and aren't being given the opportunity to even ask.

My third amendment (Amendment No. 321) seeks to improve adaptation and emergency management coordination between state, local, and federal entities in defense communities, especially the Department of Defense. By creating interagency regional resilience coordinator positions in defense communities, this amendment will enhance military readiness and community resilience. I was pleased to have the support of my colleagues, Congresswoman LURIA, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and veteran of the Navy; Congressman WITTMAN, a senior member of the Armed Services Committee; Congressman MCEACHIN; and Congresswoman SANCHEZ on this important amendment.

As a Nation, our aging stormwater infrastructure, housing stock, emergency management systems, and power grid exacerbate the threats of climate change. Thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the United States is making our infrastructure more resilient and creating jobs in the process. These investments in our infrastructure will help protect our communities and prevent needless loss and human suffering.

The Department of Defense recognizes that, as the climate changes, "leveraging knowledge and actions when planning climate change adaptation and emergency preparedness and response requires expanded collaboration with surrounding communities." This is especially true in Hampton Roads, Virginia due to the significant federal footprint, including 15 military bases, and the region's geographic complexities.

In my district and throughout Hampton Roads, communities play an essential role in supporting critical defense installations. Community assets, infrastructure, and services ensure the region's bases are ready and provide the region's 83,000 active-duty service members and their families with amenities to live, get to work, and recreate. The threat of sea level rise and increasingly frequent and severe storms, however, jeopardize these community services and military readiness.

Fortunately, the region has developed strong cooperation and expertise in this regard. This acumen and spirit of collaboration are clear in the two recent Joint Land Use Studies and a 2016 report released following